

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING A.K. MAGO ON RECEIVING THE PRAVASI BHARATIYA SAMMAN AWARD

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2010

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate A.K. Mago on receiving the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award.

On January 9th, the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award was presented to A.K. Mago for his outstanding work which has enhanced India's prestige in the United States. He is the first recipient of this award from the Houston Consulate Jurisdiction, which covers Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award is the highest honor conferred on overseas Indians. The award is presented by the President of India as a part of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conventions, which have been organized annually since 2003. Recipients of this award have made significant contributions towards a better understanding of India abroad and have supported India's causes and concerns in a tangible way. Additionally, the honorees have made significant contributions in the welfare of the Diaspora, philanthropic and charitable work in India and abroad, and in building closer links between India and its Diaspora in the economic, cultural, and scientific fields.

Madam Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in expressing our congratulations to A.K. Mago for receiving this high honor.

HONORING ARMY SERGEANT JUSTIN SIKMA FOR HIS EXEMPLARY SERVICE IN IRAQ

HON. DEBORAH L. HALVORSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2010

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Army Sergeant Justin Sikma, Bourbonnais resident and member of the 317th Engineer Company.

While working to clear a swampy field in Iraq, an extra vigilant Sergeant Sikma, spotted a live fragmentation rocket in the path of a piece of machinery being operated by a fellow soldier.

Sikma's keen eye protected the nine other men at his squad's work site.

America is fortunate to have brave soldiers like Sergeant Sikma in our armed forces keeping us safe and protecting our freedoms here at home and abroad. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Sergeant Justin Sikma and the millions of those who have served and will serve the great United States of America.

CONGRATULATING JOSEPH A. HEFFERS, RECIPIENT OF THE 2010 ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FROM THE GREATER PITTSBURGH FRIENDLY SONS OF ST. PATRICK

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2010

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to Joseph A. Heffers, the 2010 recipient of the Achievement Award from the Greater Pittston Friendly Sons of St. Patrick.

A son of the late John Heffers and Mary Golden Heffers, Mr. Heffers was born and raised in Pittston City, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

A graduate of Pittston City High School and Wilkes-Barre Business College, where he earned a degree in business and accounting, Mr. Heffers served in the United States Army from 1964 to 1967 in the Special Troops Unit at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Mr. Heffers worked at Eberhard Faber Company in Mountaintop, Pennsylvania, as a project manager for 21 years, receiving the President's Award from Mr. Eberhard Faber in 1986.

He later worked for Cooper Industries in Weatherly, Carbon County, Pennsylvania, as a production specialist and later retired from Intermetro Industries in Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Heffers is currently the Chief Executive Officer and Manager of the Metro Wire Federal Credit Union in Plains Township, Pennsylvania.

A past president of the Greater Pittston Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, Mr. Heffers serves on the advisory board of the Salvation Army in West Pittston and also is a member and former financial secretary of President John F. Kennedy Council 372 Knights of Columbus, their Council Choir and the Fourth Degree Assembly.

Mr. Heffers coached several youth athletic teams including Stoners Soccer, Jenkins Township Girls Softball and Girls Varsity Basketball at St. Mary's Assumption School in Pittston.

He is a member of St. John the Evangelist Church, Pittston.

Mr. Heffers resides in Port Griffith with his wife of 38 years, the former Mary Catherine Shea. They are the parents of two children, Joseph, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania and Mary Elizabeth Gregor, Plains Township, Pennsylvania. The couple also has two grandchildren, Maxwell Wallace Gregor and Declan Joseph Gregor.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. Heffers on this notable occasion. His exemplary service to his family and community has earned him widespread respect and recognition.

HONORING THE MEDICAL TEAM ORGANIZED BY DR. JESSE BUTLER

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2010

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to recognize a medical team from my district that recently traveled to the Dominican Republic to provide life-saving spinal surgery to victims of the Haiti earthquake.

In the immediate aftermath of January's devastating earthquake, Dr. Jesse Butler, an orthopedic spinal surgeon from Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, found a way to contribute his unique skills. In just a few short days, Dr. Butler was able to organize a medical team, collect medical equipment worth millions of dollars, and travel to the Dominican Republic.

Members of the team included anesthesiologist Dr. Howard Konowitz, from Gottlieb Memorial Hospital in Melrose Park; scrub nurse Teresa Dudic, from Gottlieb; registered nurse Maria Korbel, from the Illinois Bone & Joint Institute in Morton Grove; nurse Aimee Duque-Randolph; and physician's assistant Alicia Granger-Carlson.

Dr. Butler's team operated on 11 patients, ages 14 to 35, at Dario Contreras Hospital in Santo Domingo, where many earthquake victims were treated. Conditions were far from ideal: patients waited in crowded hallways, and surgeries were performed in rooms as hot as 85 degrees. Victims withstood the pain of their injuries without the aid of morphine.

Upon their return, members of the team recalled the fear and desperation of those they treated, but also the Haitians' will to live and persevere. And though they could only meet a fraction of Haiti's enormous medical needs, they said they hope that their work will inspire others to similarly volunteer their time and talents.

I would like to submit for my colleagues' interest the following article from the February 10th edition of the Chicago Tribune about the team's trip.

LIFE-SAVING TRIP FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS
'LIFE-CHANGING' FOR SURGICAL TEAM—SPINAL SURGERY UNIT INSPIRED BY RESOLVE OF HAITIANS

(By Courtney Flynn)

When orthopedic spine surgeon Dr. Jesse Butler saw images of the lives shattered by the Haiti earthquake, he knew he had to help the only way he knew how: by fixing broken backs.

Within 48 hours of the Jan. 12 quake, the physician from Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge organized a spinal surgery team, called in favors to collect millions of dollars of medical equipment and boarded a plane to the Dominican Republic.

"Instead of going the traditional route through a relief agency, we thought it would be more successful if we took charge of the logistics ourselves," Butler said. "We put together a team that could pretty much handle anything thrown at them."

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